

*For Immediate Release  
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## **Celebration of Nations Indigenous Arts Gathering announces full program for Year 5 - *On Seeking Wisdom.***

**19 August 2021** - Celebration of Nations, the Niagara region's highly regarded gathering of Indigenous Arts, Culture and Tradition has announced the full schedule for its hybrid edition of in-person programming at the FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre as well as virtual offerings from **10 – 12 September 2021**.

[2021 Celebration of Nations Full Program available HERE.](#)

"Since COVID-19 emerged, it has become even more clear how important community and the arts are to maintaining healthy minds and hearts," said **Artistic Director Michele-Elise Burnett**. "Artists are often at the forefront of speaking truth to power while also providing purpose for humans to gather to fulfill our ancient and ingrained need for connection. I am thrilled that we are able to provide this hybrid edition to once again bring community together to learn, share and reflect on the deep wisdom of Indigenous cultures."

Tickets are on sale now for two in-person concert experiences in Partridge Hall, a first for the PAC since last fall. Kicking it off is Friday's concert event [TREATY: A Reconciliation Revelry](#), a new creation by Celebration of Nations Artistic Producer Tim Johnson that features an ensemble of renowned and award-winning Indigenous and allied musicians coupled with filmed reflections on reconciliation and the Indigenous experience.

"The program's stories and messages, conveyed through video, narrative and music are situated in the realm of contemporary issues and events, but that provide audiences with historical context for understanding Indigenous experiences and Indigenous realities today," said **Artistic Producer Tim Johnson**. "Brief film segments featuring Indigenous and Canadian leaders in civil society, education, culture and the arts speak to the themes, thereby building a story that seeks to pave the way forward for Truth and Reconciliation."

Saturday's concert experience features an evening with prominent Indigenous singer/songwriters [Amanda Rheume and Logan Staats](#). Limited tickets are available for both in-person concert experiences and [available HERE](#).

The 2021 workshop series offers hands-on opportunities to learn from skilled, Indigenous artists and Knowledge Keepers. In partnership with **101 Deweguns Living Hearts Legacy**, four sanding workshops will take place over the weekend as part of this longer-term project with the vision of healthy and continuous reconciliation. Additional workshops include: Dressing Talking Sticks **Jackie Labonte and Oliver Nobosin**; Medicine Wheel Bracelets with **April Mitchell-Boudreau**; Creating a Sculpture from the Land led by **Soaring Eagles Secondary Program Graduate Students**; Nokomis 215+ Moccasin Project Workshop with **Shannon Cotter**; and a virtual workshop offering of Wiigwaas (Birchbark) Beaded Earrings with **Nikki Shawana**. Workshops range from FREE to \$15 per participant, [register HERE](#).

Throughout the weekend, safe and free activities have been planned in the backyard of the FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre, where our Sacred Fire will also burn, officiated by Indigenous Elders with Sunrise Ceremonies each day, and cared for by faithful Firekeepers **Fred Bowering** and **Brian Kon**.

Highlights include a very special, FREE, not-to-be-missed presentation of **Cris Derksen's Orchestral Powwow** featuring **Chippewa Travellers** and members of the **Niagara Symphony Orchestra** on Saturday 11 September at 4pm. And among still many other programs, **Victoria Poet Laureate Janet Marie Rogers** returns to curate and perform the **Empathic Poetry Café** live in the backyard with a group of creative and expressive Indigenous writers at 6pm that evening. Saturday's program will be hosted by **One Dish, One Mic**, the popular radio show that explores Indigenous issues from **CKTB 610 AM**.

Celebration of Nations is an opportunity for local, national, and international visitors to actively participate in an inclusive and engaging community gathering that fosters a greater sense of belonging, support of meaningful reconciliation, and that engenders a lasting legacy of goodwill. The 2020 virtual edition attracted more than 36,000 viewers from across the globe.

Additionally, the PAC is pleased to welcome the community back into the facility for performances and workshops. Tickets and workshop registrations are available through our online **Box Office**. In keeping with all regulatory provincial and public health regulations, health and safety protocols will be in place including reduced capacities, enhanced cleaning protocols and mandatory mask wearing in all spaces. Please visit the PAC's **website** for detailed information on our safe reopening plans.

“The past 18 months have been a struggle for many artists and arts workers, losing the direct, live connection that provides both purpose and sustenance to their very being,”

said **Colleen Smith, Executive Director of FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre.** “This year’s Celebration of Nations is our official return to live performance and the art of gathering. We are grateful for the opportunity to honour, celebrate and grow our relationship with Indigenous peoples while supporting the return of live arts and culture to our community.”

Celebration of Nations is part of a long-term vision of the FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre, Kakekalanicks and the City of St. Catharines to build on the Two Row Wampum that promotes all Nations walking together, in parallel, with respect, compassion and understanding to cultivate an inclusive community for our shared future. It is intended to provide opportunities for national and international visitors to actively participate in an inclusive and engaging community gathering that will foster a greater sense of belonging, support meaningful reconciliation, and leave a lasting legacy of goodwill for future generations.

Kakekalanicks’ mission is to promote Indigenous art and artists to broad-based audiences and acts to educate the public about the deep-rooted beauty and uniqueness of each Nation's culture, heritage and traditions through the medium of the Arts.

The FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre aims to provide meaningful opportunities to bring our community together in a place of mutual understanding, empathy and respect through the arts.



**The 2021 Celebration of Nations program at a glance:**

Live = In person. The PAC is pleased to welcome the community back into the facility for performances and workshops. In keeping with all regulatory provincial and public health

regulations, health and safety protocols will be in place including reduced capacities, enhanced cleaning protocols and mandatory mask wearing in all spaces. Visit the PAC's [website](#) for detailed information.

Livestream = Available for viewing through FirstOntario PAC YouTube and Facebook Channels as well as Celebration of Nations, Kakekalanicks Indigenous Arts and partner Facebook pages.

### **Friday 10 September**

#### **Dawn - Sunrise Ceremony with Elder Dave Labbe**

The Sacred Fire is lit by Fire Keepers Fred Bowering and Brian Kon, officiated by Elder Dave Labbe, where it will be cared for until sundown on Sunday.

Live - Backyard of FirstOntario PAC | FREE

#### **7am - Coffee and Bannock: Teachings and Stories of the Innu Confederacy with Elder Dave Labbe.** Following the Sunrise Ceremony.

Live - Backyard of FirstOntario PAC | FREE

#### **6:30pm - Welcome + 2021 Celebration of Nations Outstanding Achievement Awards**

With a reading by special guest Dr. Duke Redbird of his poem, *Stolen Children Stolen Souls*.

Live + livestreamed - Partridge Hall, FirstOntario PAC | FREE

#### **7:30pm - Strong Water Youth Singers**

Opening performance in support of the *TREATY: A Reconciliation Revelry*.

Live + livestreamed from Partridge Hall | \$25+HST or FREE via livestream

#### **7:40pm - TREATY: A Reconciliation Revelry**

Featuring Joshua Arden Miller, Oren Doxtator, Alan Duffy, Blaine Bomberry, Miles Evans-Branagh, The Ollivanders, Tasheena Doxtator, Rob Lamothe and James Wilson.

Live + livestreamed from Partridge Hall | \$25+HST or FREE via livestream

### **SATURDAY 11 SEPTEMBER**

#### **Dawn - Sunrise Ceremony with Elder Allan Jamieson Sr.**

Live - Backyard of FirstOntario PAC | FREE

#### **7am – Coffee and Bannock: The Power of the Dawn with Elder Allan Jamieson Sr.**

Live - Backyard of FirstOntario PAC | FREE

#### **9am - Anishinaabe Aadziwin Miinwaa Kinoomaagewin - Anishinaabe Culture and Teachings**

Led by the Shawana Family.

Live + livestreamed - Backyard of FirstOntario PAC | FREE

#### **9am – 1pm 101 Deweguns Sanding Workshop**

Live - RBC Innovation Studio, FirstOntario PAC | FREE

Limited capacity. Preregistration required.

**10am – 3pm Niagara Regional Native Centre Food Vendor**

Enjoy delicious food cooked up with love by NRNC staff to raise funds for their annual Nurturing Our Roots Powwow.

Backyard of FirstOntario PAC | CASH

**10am – 3pm Welland Museum Discovery Zone**

Hands-on activities such as dot art, games, and puzzles as well as Métis educational kits available for teachers and educators.

Live - Backyard of FirstOntario PAC | FREE

**10am – 3pm St. Catharines Library: Discover our Indigenous Collection!**

Visit our pop-up library station! Families can drop in for story times highlighting picture books by Indigenous authors at 11am, 12:30pm & 2pm. Take-away activity kits - while supplies last!

Live - Backyard of FirstOntario PAC | FREE

**10am – 12:30pm Dressing Talking Sticks Workshop with Jackie Labonte and Oliver Nobosin**

Live – Robertson Theatre, FirstOntario PAC | \$15+HST

Limited capacity. Preregistration required.

**11am - Youth Moccasins Talk: Preserving Wisdom**

Led by Courtney Copoc-Hopkins with Youth guests Dalton Bird and Semiah Smith.

Livestreamed | FREE

**2pm - Six Years Hence**

Moderated by Celebration of Nations Artistic Producer Tim Johnson, with guests: The Right Honourable Paul Martin, Prime Minister of Canada (2003-6); Ava Hill, Elected Chief of the 56<sup>th</sup> + 57<sup>th</sup> Six Nations Elected Council; and Dr. Lynn Wells, Provost and Vice-President Academic at Brock University.

Livestreamed | FREE

**2pm - Creating a Sculpture from the Land Workshop (for ages 8 – 12)**

Led by Soaring Eagles Secondary Program Graduate Students

Live - Robertson Theatre, FirstOntario PAC | FREE

Limited capacity. Preregistration required.

**2pm - Wiigwaas (Birchbark) Earrings Workshop**

Led by Nikki Shawana.

Via ZOOM | \$15+HST

Limited capacity. Preregistration required.

**2pm – 6pm 101 Deweguns Sanding Workshop**

Live - RBC Innovation Studio, FirstOntario PAC | FREE

Limited capacity. Preregistration required.

**4pm - Cris Derksen's Orchestral Powwow featuring Chippewa Travelers and members of the Niagara Symphony Orchestra**

Cris Derksen will be performing her unique blend of Indigenous powwow songs and classical orchestra music in this not-to-be-missed special presentation!  
Live + livestreamed – Backyard of FirstOntario PAC | FREE

**6pm - Empathic Poetry Café - On Seeking Wisdom**

Hosted by award winning Mohawk writer from Six Nations Janet Marie Rogers and featuring Alicia Elliott, Jan Longboat, Laura Kooji and Nea Read.  
Live and livestreamed - Backyard of FirstOntario PAC | FREE

**7:30pm - An Evening with Amanda Rheame and Logan Staats**

Two celebrated Indigenous singer-songwriters set to light up the Partridge Hall stage.  
Live + livestreamed from Partridge Hall | \$25+HST or FREE via livestream  
Saturday 11 September 7:30pm

**Sunday 12 September**

**Dawn – Sunrise Ceremony with Grandmother Marie Jones**

Live - Backyard of FirstOntario PAC | FREE

**7am – Coffee and Bannock: Spirit of Life and Ways of Being is an Ancient Knowledge**

Live - Backyard of FirstOntario PAC | FREE

**7am – 3pm Hope and Healing Art Installation, Created in real time by Tracey-Mae Chambers**

Live - Backyard of FirstOntario PAC | FREE

**8am-9am Within, Within with Reverend Nokomis Migizinz Cindilee**

Live - Backyard of FirstOntario PAC | FREE

**9am – 11am - Songs, Stories, and Dances of the Haudenosaunee, Led by Gary Parker**

Live + livestreamed - Backyard of FirstOntario PAC | FREE

**9am – 1pm - 101 Deweguns Sanding Workshop**

Live - RBC Innovation Studio, FirstOntario PAC | FREE

Limited capacity. Preregistration required.

**10am - Medicine Wheel Bracelet Workshop with April Mitchell-Boudreau**

Live – Robertson Theatre, FirstOntario PAC | \$15+HST

Limited capacity. Preregistration required.

**10am – 3pm Niagara Regional Native Centre Food Vendor**

Enjoy delicious food cooked up with love by NRNC staff to raise funds for their annual Nurturing Our Roots Powwow.

Backyard of FirstOntario PAC | CASH

**10am – 3pm Niagara Falls History Museum’s Discovering Kaná:ta Exploration Zone**

Explore reproductions of Indigenous artefacts created by Six Nations artisans to allow visitors to engage with history in a hands-on way.

Live - Backyard of FirstOntario PAC | FREE

**11am - Her Moccasins Talk: Matriarch Circle on Nurturing Wisdom**

A sharing circle with community Matriarchs: Grandmother Gail Whitlow, Grandmother Marie Jones, Grandmother Renee Hill-Thomas and Traditional Healer Audra Sewell Maloney.

Livestreamed | FREE

**12:30pm – The Metis Fiddlers**

Discover the history of the Métis people in Canada through Indigenous fiddle traditions passed down by Elders from across the country.

Live + livestreamed - Backyard of FirstOntario PAC | FREE

**1:30pm – Talking Turtle Stories with Perry Ground**

Traditional Master Storyteller, Turtle Clan member of the Onondaga Nation, Perry Ground will share several Haudenosaunee Stories with a fun and energetic style.

Live + livestreamed - Backyard of FirstOntario PAC | FREE

**2pm - Nokomis 215+ Moccasin Project Workshop** Led by Shannon Cotter

Live – Robertson Theatre, FirstOntario PAC | \$15+HST

Limited capacity. Preregistration required.

**2pm - Fireside: On Seeking Wisdom**

Led by Celebration of Nations Artistic Producer Tim Johnson and Plenty Canada ED/ Algonquin Elder Larry McDermott, with Eli Enns, Melanie Goodchild, and Rob MacDonald.

Livestreamed | FREE

**2pm – 6pm 101 Deweguns Sanding Workshop**

RBC Innovation Studio, FirstOntario PAC | FREE

Limited capacity. Preregistration required.

**3:30pm – Uplift Sharing Circle – Preparations for Drums Across Canada**

Celebration of Nations Artistic Director Michele-Elise Burnett with Angela DeMontigny, Audra Sewell Maloney and Erin Moraghan share the vision and mission for Drums Across Canada.

Live + livestreamed, Backyard of FirstOntario PAC | FREE

### **4pm - Drums Across Canada**

A traditional Call and Response with other communities across the country, drumming for the children's spirits who never made it home, for the Ancestors, the Matriarchs, MMIWG, the next generation, for healing, and for wisdom. All welcome.  
Live + livestreamed, Backyard of FirstOntario PAC | FREE

### **Dusk – Closing the Sacred Fire**

Celebration of Nations Fire Keepers Fred Bowering and Brian Kon and community will close the 2021 Celebration of Nations Sacred Fire. All welcome.  
Live + livestreamed, Backyard of FirstOntario PAC | FREE

### **Ongoing - The ABCs of Mother Earth**

Soaring Eagles Secondary Program, Niagara Catholic District School Board  
St. Paul Street facing windows of Partridge Hall | FREE

### **Ongoing - Métis Encampment**

The Niagara Region Métis Council will bring elements of a traditional Métis encampment to Celebration of Nations, living and sharing the culture as their Métis ancestors would have in the early 1800s.  
Backyard of FirstOntario PAC | FREE

### **About Celebration of Nations**

Celebration of Nations is part of a long-term vision of the FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre, Kakekalanicks and the City of St. Catharines to build on the Two Row Wampum that promotes all Nations walking together, in parallel, with respect, compassion and understanding to cultivate an inclusive community for our shared future. It is intended to provide opportunities for national and international visitors to actively participate in an inclusive and engaging community gathering that will foster a greater sense of belonging, support meaningful reconciliation, and leave a lasting legacy of goodwill for future generations.

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### **About the FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre**

The FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre is located downtown St. Catharines, Ontario on the shared traditional lands of the Haudenosaunee, Anishinaabe, Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, the Neutral Peoples and many other Indigenous people from across Turtle Island. We offer our sincere gratitude and respect to the original and continued stewards of this land. We also acknowledge Indigenous, Black, People of Colour, and 2SLGBTQQAI+ that have been marginalized for centuries and more - and our collective responsibility to take action for a better world free from oppression, discrimination and racism. The PAC aims to provide meaningful opportunities to bring our community together in a place of mutual understanding, empathy, and respect through the arts.

The FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre is a 95,000 square foot cultural complex comprised of four state-of-the-art performance venues that host a signature presentation of international and local performing artists. Designed by Diamond Schmitt Architects, the FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre plays a vital role in the renaissance of downtown St. Catharines, serving as the



catalyst in modernizing the area and reinforcing the brilliance of Niagara region's diverse cultural cluster.

The FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre acknowledges the Department of Canadian Heritage, the Canada Council for the Arts, the City of St. Catharines and our longtime partnership with Brock University for their ongoing support.

For additional information and to arrange media interviews, please contact Jeff Hardy, Marketing and Communications Manager, [jhardy@firstontariopac.ca](mailto:jhardy@firstontariopac.ca)